

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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1. The appointment of Marshal G. K. Zhukov as Minister of Defense [redacted] will definitely increase the prestige of the Soviet Army. The Army, however, will continue to be strictly controlled by the Party and its members in the Presidium. All members of the Army will receive with great favor the new appointments of their former Minister of Defense, N. A. Bulganin, and [redacted] of the very popular soldier and former Deputy Minister of Defense, Zhukov. The Army will recognize that this considerably elevates its standing and will also expect that these new appointments will result in new decrees which ought to favor the Army. Source stresses, however, that these two appointments should in no way be taken as an indication that the Army will eventually rise to total power or even that any attempt at such a rise will be made. Nor does the present alignment within the collective leadership indicate a cessation of all struggle within this leadership. 25X1

2. [redacted] the members of the armed services will now be reminded day and night of their responsibility to the Party. The Communist Party control mechanism exists and will continue to exist in a monolithic form throughout the Soviet Army. This political control apparatus is directly subordinate to the Central Committee of the CPSU and thus to the collective leadership, and, by reporting directly to the Central Committee, will give the Party continuous control over the Army, even though the latter is now considerably elevated in authority and prestige. The Counter-intelligence Directorate of the KGB, in coordination with the Party units within the Army, though to a lesser degree than the Party, will play an important role in maintaining this rigid and immediate control. Even in 1953 the control of the Party in the MVD was becoming more evident. Actions to be taken by investigative organs of the MVD were often checked first with the Secretary of the Party Bureau within that organ. In addition to the coordinated grip of the Party and counter-intelligence on all anti-Communist elements within the Army, there is the fact 25X1

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that previous attempts at seizing power by such men as Beriya have proved unsuccessful. Beriya, with his control of all punitive organs, the troops of the MVD, and the secret channels of the MVD, was more perfectly situated for a move to supreme power than any individual or group of individuals within the Army. Therefore [redacted] no [redacted] possibility of a future bid for complete authority by any group within the Army or any Army group led by Bulganin and/or Zhukov, but [redacted] the Party will continue to be the center of plots and struggles. 25X1

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3. Though completely unexpected [redacted] the appointment of Zhukov as Minister of Defense does not in any way change [redacted] Khrushchev's present position as the top man within the collective leadership. [redacted] it was Khrushchev himself who selected Zhukov to be Minister of Defense. It is indicative of Khrushchev's feeling that the Government needed to be strengthened by a popular figure who enjoys the favor of the people throughout the country as well as in Moscow. The appointment also speaks of Khrushchev's present attempt, an effort which [redacted] will continue, to exercise his authority under the cloak of collective leadership and to make every effort to establish a balance and harmony within the group of which he is now the leader. 25X1

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4. [redacted]

The degree of success to be obtained in the Soviet Union's negotiations with the West will have great effect on the balance which Khrushchev is now trying to establish. These negotiations will carry a friendlier tone toward the West, although there will be intermittent blasts at the warmongering attitude of the West in order to explain internal policy and manipulations of the economy. Should this new tone meet with acceptance abroad and should some resolution of the internal economic conflicts be found, the new leadership can be expected to survive severe ruptures for the time being. If the opposite proves to be the fact, further readjustments within the collective leadership can be expected, but without any of the rough undemocratic jostling of the Beriya affair. 25X1

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5. The present Khrushchev collective leadership strongly desires to appear more democratic. It has already shown the people that a man who had done service for his country but who had made serious mistakes is not simply stood up against a wall. Malenkov can be expected to carry out his functions as Minister of Electric Power Stations but to act in name only as Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers. He may possibly even appear at diplomatic receptions and will be in evidence at Red Square on 1 May. After a year has gone by, there may arise some criticism of the manner in which the Ministry of Electric Power Stations has been fulfilling its plan, and as a result Malenkov will be pushed further into the background. This removal will be gradual and in all ways befitting a leadership which has acquired a more cultured and democratic method of ruling its country.
6. When evaluating the present realignment within the leadership, it should be remembered not only that Khrushchev is playing first violin and that Bulganin and Zhukov are his appointees, but also that they, though both military men, are now well woven into the Party. Bulganin finds his past military position subordinated to his relationship with the Council of Ministers, and Zhukov, as a member of the Central Committee, has a responsibility which should challenge any future military role he might play as Minister of Defense. Zhukov's interview with William Randolph Hearst, Jr. [redacted] was a task assigned by the Presidium and, though not every word was prepared for him, the points he was to make were clearly indicated to him. At this time he already knew he was to become Minister of Defense, although the announcement had not been officially made. In this case the Government felt it necessary to make clear to the West and its own people that this military figure did not want war. Molotov, in a similarly assigned task, had spoken to the world to show it that the Soviet Union under its new leadership could not be pushed. He had shown the Soviet Union's allies that there was no cause for fear, that the Soviet Union was stronger in many ways than the United States, and he had spoken in yet a third voice to his own people to tell them that the Soviet Union had hydrogen bombs more powerful in fact than those of the United States. Therefore they should not be alarmed. Molotov's speech, followed by the 25X1

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appointment of a military man as Minister of Defense, necessitated some conciliatory statement to the world. Zhukov made this statement. [redacted] 25X1
the material to be released in the interview was government-directed, [redacted]

[redacted] and [redacted] intended effectively to diminish the alarm, and thus the resistance, of the Western peoples. Zhukov's mention of the possibility of visiting the United States is [redacted] an attempt on the part of the Soviets "to test the soil for such a future meeting." Zhukov, from the Soviet point of view, cannot come to the United States as a tourist, but must have a definite purpose for the visit. Relations are such between the two countries that such a visit could not be gracefully executed at this point. However, should the future bring even the slightest improvement in these relationships, then Zhukov might visit the United States on the pretext of a conference or a discussion of arms reductions. [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] the Soviets do not believe that President Eisenhower is in a position to invite the Soviet Minister of Defense at a time when the relations between the two countries are so strained. 25X1

7. Every attempt will be made within the collective leadership to forget past enmities, and indications of previous frictions between Zhukov, Bulganin and Khrushchev should not be given too much importance. A rumor which had wide distribution in 1946 stated that one of the reasons Stalin had removed Zhukov was because of the antipathy existing between him and Bulganin. The rumor continued that, when Bulganin and Zhukov were together at the front, Zhukov informed the now Premier of the USSR that his interference in Zhukov's military matters was not desired and further that Bulganin's advice, unless requested, was not desired, especially in matters where Bulganin was completely unfit to advise. [redacted]

8. During the war Zhukov enjoyed a reputation for being an independent thinker in all military matters. [redacted] this should not be confused with his present situation, where he is well aware that he has risen as a result of his being a member of the Communist Party and that he was given his present position as a result of a decision of the Party. [redacted] decrees. [redacted] 25X1

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